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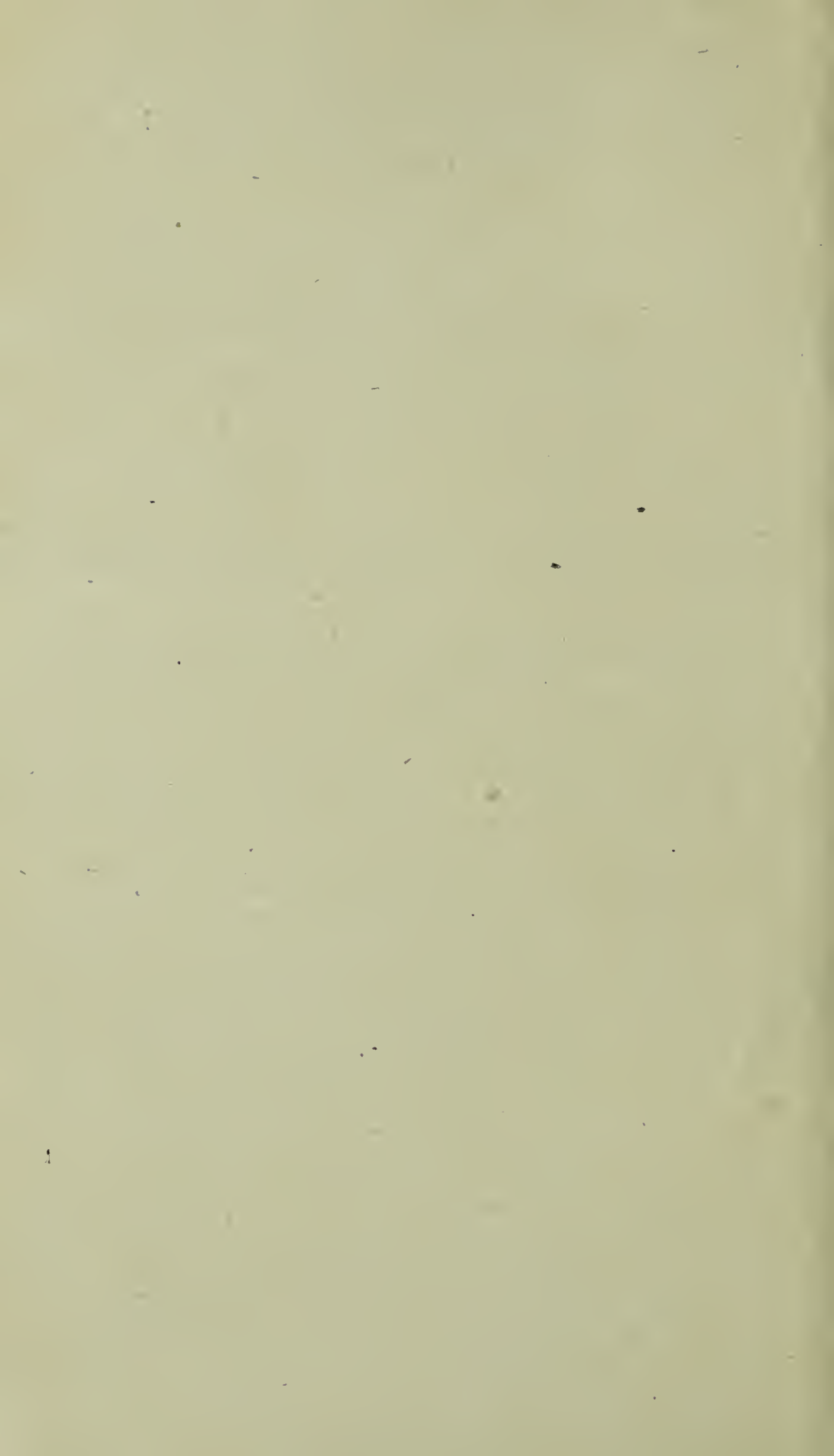
American Missionary Association.

The Training of Missionaries in
our Theological Seminaries.

BY

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THE TRAINING OF MISSIONARIES IN OUR THEOLOGICAL SEMINARIES.

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This is a timely topic, because of its suggestion of confidence felt in our seminaries, by our great benevolent organizations, to give the men they need practical training. It would be a bad day for churches or seminaries when they felt their interests divorced. There is a rising assurance that the mutual gift shall in each case be made good. A supreme purpose on the part of the seminaries is to train missionaries. If it becomes the chief anxiety of the churches to send men to be trained and support them after they are trained, the kingdom will advance with leaps and bounds. There are two lines of suggestion in our topic, what is being done, on the one hand, and next, what ought to be done.

I have been interested, after glancing through catalogues and special letters from our own and seminaries of other denominations, to see how much attention is given to this precise discipline. It is conducted in a fourfold way; first by special courses of lectures and conferences, dealing with the philosophy and the experience of missionary work; next, by breaking up the field of missionary activity into departments with professors in charge of each and an opportunity to specialize given; third, and perhaps most effectively, by organizations among the students, such as the famous old Society of Inquiry on Andover Hill, the foremost of all such organizations; and fourthly, by visits of missionaries from the field

and agents of benevolent organizations who present the results of thorough study. These methods, together with the use of selected libraries and comprehensive museums of missionary objects, are pursued by all seminaries of first-rate standing.

It should be emphasized, however, at this point, that the real preparation of a missionary, as it has been from the beginning, belongs to the central and deeper sphere of character and intelligent faith. The topic before all minds to-day is, What is Christianity? What place has Christ in it? What is the essence of His teaching? What is its relation to philosophy? What, as thus conveyed, are the "mighty thoughts by which men live?" Preachers of these truths which they hold in their own experience, have mastered in their Bible presentation, have studied in their historical effects, are the ministers for the time and missionaries to the real needs of men. Therefore no extraneous study, no restless skimming of wide fields of observation, should distract and disturb the student of divine character and human nature in preparing to realize among men the kingdom of God.

However, there must be a degree of initiation into the mastery of practical problems in their missionary aspect; that is, in those out reaching efforts which run beyond parochial limits. Every theological faculty should have one or two keen pairs of eyes through which students may look upon this work; men who themselves have had some little experience as well as possess warm hearts for this enterprise. In four particulars again, this help should be given and they are of rising importance.

1. Students should receive some guidance as to missionary investigation; and, to place the emphasis upon work to be done in this country, in sociological study. They should have in their minds some scheme classifying for them their objects of study. This is needed for clearness of thought, and applies as well to the larger elements of society, classes, sections, races, as to the narrower limits of a city. A good suggestion is to treat society as though it were an individual man, asking certain leading questions, the simplest one can think of, but exceedingly fruitful when applied to society at large. Thus the question, Where did he come from? involves the knowledge of the origins of the people composing a city or a state, their hereditary possessions or prejudices; the contribution they have to make to, or the load they impose upon, the common life. The question, Where does he live? involves a study of homes from the palace to the one-roomed cabin. Or, How does he earn his bread? involves all questions of labor. How does he play, questions of popular amusements, playgrounds, theaters, observance of Sunday. So one may go on. By such a framework the student can analyze and more easily remember the results of his search. On the other hand, he should be taught how to preserve material, by what kind of catalogues, notebooks or other receptacles. Above all, emphasis should be placed upon his memory, strengthened through the association of his discoveries with points lying deep in his mind. He should study with his map before him and root his observations in the soil; he should weave what he sees into trains of events or notable biography. The body of discovery

should be alive and quick to spring into service on demand.

2. Next, upon this basis of general information should be placed a knowledge of special problems, going along with comprehensive views of the whole problem. In all developments there are three stages, the awakening of impulse and desire; the classifying of gifts for special service through education; and the Christianizing of the whole by giving the right motive. How to overcome inertia; how to bring all powers of the mind as well as of the hoe handle into operation; how evangelical work should be adjusted to the rest; these are special questions, yet needing to be seen all together. For such knowledge experts are needed, and therefore I plead for the admission into every seminary of those representatives, especially secretaries in our Congregational societies, who have studied the situation, defined the problems, mastered the history of past attempts to solve them, discovered strategic points for the application of new effort. The annual life of any seminary is impoverished in a serious measure if some one or two of our benevolent societies is not represented upon its teaching staff. It is there better than elsewhere that secretarial power can be applied, for the training of ministers who themselves shall educate their people in missions and take the laboring oar in raising money.

3. A third suggestion, based upon this expert knowledge of the scope of the problem, of the comprehensive treatment needed, and upon work which our own societies are doing, there should be given to outgoing students a true sense of proportion in the assignment of gifts. That such sense is now lacking is unfortunately quite too common. The great and the small causes are not seen in proper perspective. Side issues get advantage over full-orbed efforts. Everything runs to the kindergarten, or to industrialism, or to some other important but imperfect end. All kinds of causes and all sorts of men are perpetually knocking at the pastor's door or the committee man's office. Such applications get a hear-

ing because there is no counterbalancing consideration to place them where they belong; and it is so much easier to say yes than no to the persistent beggar. Now, there are certain great causes or crises which are laid upon Christian hearts by Providence, great disasters, great open doors of opportunity through mighty movements of history. These undoubtedly arise for first attention because they speak in behalf of humanity with the emphasis of God. Such is a great fire or flood or famine or condition of devastation through war. Let the generous heart find free expression for these. But beyond these let us give a threefold classification to objects of benevolence; primary causes, secondary causes and personal causes. In the last class, I would place some well-meaning brother who offers to give a lecture in native costume for the pursuit of his own education with ultimate missionary intentions. As a secondary course, I should place some special enterprise emphasizing some fragment of effort, however great and appealing, such as fresh air work, kindergarten work, industrial work, and taken by itself, even hospital work. Not that these are not essential, but they are all included in the more comprehensive work which belongs to primary causes.

By primary causes, I mean the work of our own missionary societies. Take such a work as that of this Association. It touches life, among the clearly defined areas of society for which it works, at every point, from cradle to grave. It builds homes, it teaches industry, it calls out the higher powers, it conducts eager souls into the regions of the ideal, it instills patriotism, it preaches the gospel. It has been notably in advance in many of the adaptations of training to life which have become popular and have been taken up with most gratifying success. Now, therefore, while it is true that these latter we ought to help, it is still more true that we should not permit the other to go unhelped. I plead, therefore, for instruction to be given in our seminaries that these primary causes be given the first place in all our churches.

4. Then there is another suggestion, and the last, which it would seem almost unnecessary to make, and yet touches what some have felt to show a defect, and all must see to be a necessity. Our students should go forth from our theological seminaries filled with the spirit of Christian patriotism. We hear much pointless discussion of the place of the minister in politics. He is bound to be in politics, taking that word in the larger and Aristotelian sense. To be sure, he touches political life at the roots of motive. He is first of all a preacher of righteousness. He is a prophet, not a partisan. He acts upon society through the channels of influence to be found in his congregation. Whenever and wherever a principle is at stake; where a courageous voice is needed to give an interpretation of history in the light of what is right, there is his platform. In this tremendous problem of the elevation of the backward peoples among us he must stand for the truths that man is made in the image of God, that he has certain natural rights, above all to the freest and fullest development; and that the royal law under which he should be treated is this: "We that are strong ought to bear the infirmities of the weak and not to please ourselves." He must feel that these great national problems are his problems. The men and women who make up the nation are of his own household; the flag is his to keep unstained by dishonor; the spirit of our civilization is in his charge, to keep it Christian. He must go forth from the seminary with the education of an American citizen and at the heart of it the constraint of a great compassion like that of his Master and of a loyalty that seeks a foremost position in the army that has for its task the saving of the nation. It would be the severest judgment upon any of our seminaries, and, thank God, it cannot be pronounced upon them, could it be said that while her students became experts in the special sciences there pursued, they went forth with hearts indifferent to the fate of the great republic by whose life they live and where God has placed them to serve their generation.